

To: Agency Directors
From: Marcia Adams
Subject: Re-Entry Plan for State Employees

Agency Directors,

Thank you for your leadership the past two months as we have navigated unprecedented times in state government as a result of COVID-19. We appreciate you working with the South Carolina Department of Administration (Admin) to quickly reduce the number of employees physically reporting to work and adopting new policies and procedures to promote work-from-home opportunities to the maximum extent possible. As a result of your leadership and the dedication of your staff, we have been able to continue critical state government operations throughout this period of time.

As aspects of the South Carolina economy reopen, it is time to begin a phased approach to bringing employees back to the workplace. A detailed plan for the phased approach is included in this communication and will be shared with Human Resources Directors. The first phase of this plan will begin when Admin is able to procure personal protective equipment for state agencies, but no later than June 1. The start of the second phase will be at least two weeks after the start of the first phase, but the exact start date will be determined after consultation with the DHEC.

There are a few high-level points that I would like to make about the three-phase plan:

- The plan is intended to give Agency Directors significant discretion to manage your workforce because you know your agency's services, employees and constituents best while guiding all of state government through a phased approach to state government.
- South Carolina state government has made significant improvements to our ability to have employees work-from-home without significantly interrupting our ability to continue to provide critical services. Throughout the first and second phases of these guidelines you should continue to adopt liberal work-from-home practices to promote social distancing and mitigate disease transmission.
- In the first phase, employees whose work cannot readily continue to be done remotely should be returned to the workplace while we partner with you to take appropriate measures to make them feel as safe as possible in their workplace.
- If you have employees that are within the higher risk or special populations or who care for someone in the population vulnerable to COVID-19, we recommend that you work with them to make accommodations. If you have employees who are simply not comfortable physically returning to the workplace and they cannot continue to readily perform their job duties from home, please work with your human resources department or the Division of State Human Resources to discuss solutions.

Nothing in this high-level summary should be read to supersede or contradict the guideline in the following documents. If you find conflicts between any of the documents, please let Karen Wingo, Director of State Human Resources, or me know as soon as possible.

- **Re-entry to the Workplace Plan**
<https://admin.sc.gov/sites/default/files/Re-entry%20plan%20for%20State%20Employees.pdf>

- **DHEC's Guidance on Return Work**
https://www.scdhec.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/DHEC-Employer-Return-to-Work-Guidance-05.05.2020_1.pdf
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Reopen Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

The Re-entry to the Workplace Plan contains specific guidance on a variety of topics including screening employees, facility considerations and staffing plans. Here are some examples to be considering as you work with your teams to develop plans for returning employees to the workplace:

- Employees and customers should always maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others to the maximum extent possible.
- Common areas, including break rooms or meeting rooms, where individuals are likely to congregate should be restricted to single use wherever possible.
- Meetings should be conducted via conference call or video conferencing whenever possible.
- Stagger start/end times or adjust points of entry to minimize congregating at the start and end of shifts
- Increase the frequency of cleaning of high touch surfaces.
- Communicate to employees' expectations for personal protective equipment (PPE) and train them on the use of PPE. All state employees will be encouraged to wear cloth face coverings.
- Consider installation of barriers at customer interfacing spaces to mitigate the spread of airborne pathogens.
- Establish procedures for how the agency will handle employees who test positive for COVID-19. It is recommended that you require employees to notify the agency immediately if they are exposed to illness or sick.

Thank you for your work adjusting to an ever-changing landscape. Please note this guidance is by no means all-inclusive of considerations agencies will need to make and Admin will continue to provide information over the next several weeks to assist you in making return to the workplace decisions. We also plan to hold conference calls with both Agency Directors and HR Directors to answer questions.

In the interim, if you have any questions regarding returning employees to the workplace, please contact Karen Wingo (803-422-8645) or me.

Sincerely,